

Summer 2010

Dear Students and Parents,

For so many students, it's hard to find enough time to read during the school terms. The irony of our school system is that despite our best intentions, we all end up with so many demands on our time that reading doesn't get top priority. With the Internet taking more and more time and space, it's even more important to find a change of pace and immerse ourselves in the world of books. Please help your child find ways to do that this summer. Look for audio books for car rides. Read aloud. Begin a book group with family or friends.

We continue to ask all upper school students to read a minimum of two books. Please see the specific section of this letter which addresses each class level's required book(s). Students should arrive at school in September with two things:

- Their required reading books
- Responses to the required book(s) for their grade – please see specific instructions for each grade (**Also, please note: ELL students should NOT complete the assignments detailed in this letter, but will instead receive an assignment from Mr. Massey, their ELL teacher.**)

**FOR SIXTH GRADE:** Read *Incident At Hawk's Hill*, by Allan Eckert, and another novel of your choice. Think about your selection carefully because we will be asking you to compare and contrast Ben from *Incident At Hawk's Hill* with the main character in the novel you choose.

For writing: This story is about people's perceptions about animals and of their relationships with animals. Discuss the range of these relationships and how the characters mentioned in the book feel about animals. How do some of these people's views compare/contrast with Ben's relationship with the badger? Also, explain how this relationship changes Ben and in what ways. Please use quotes from the text to support your statements. Your writing should be one page in length and be in your own words.

**FOR SEVENTH GRADE:** A book you've chosen from the following list and a book you choose on your own.

*Tituba* by Ann Petry

*Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain

*Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson

*The Sword in the Stone* by T.H. White

*The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

For writing: Choose one conflict in the novel, and write about why that conflict is so difficult for each character involved. Conflicts can be man v. man (or woman), man v. self, man v. nature, man v. ideas. Be sure to include one quotation that shows the depth of the conflict, and discuss that quotation in your own words. One page typed and double spaced.

**FOR EIGHTH GRADE:** Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* and  
Julian Houston's *New Boy*

As we discussed during our summer reading meeting on the last day of classes, we would like you to participate in our inaugural class "wiki." This will provide an opportunity for the entire eighth grade to engage in an online, written dialogue about your reading experience.

Here is the URL, [www.bement.org/english8](http://www.bement.org/english8), to use to access the "wiki." This address will also be posted on the Bement website. Please remember that the page will not be active for you to share your thoughts and ideas until *after* July 4<sup>th</sup>.

**FOR NINTH GRADE:** Please choose a memoir from the list below. Search the Internet for reviews or go to a library or bookstore and check out the books. Please write (typed, double-spaced) one to two pages about a passage or event in your memoir that epitomizes the narrator's strength of character.

Your second book choice begins with the first installation in Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson series, the New York Times Best Seller, *The Lightning Thief*.

*Winterdance* by Gary Paulsen  
*Having our Say: The Delaney Sisters' First 100 Years*  
by Sarah and A. Elizabeth Delaney  
*Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer  
*Bad Boy* by Walter Dean Myers  
*Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer  
*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou  
*American Childhood* by Annie Dillard  
*Reading Lolita in Teheran* by Azar Nafisi  
*Maiden Voyage* by Tanya Aibe  
*In The Shadow of Man* by Jane Goodall  
*Out of Africa* by Isak Dinesen  
*Missing Alice* by Susan Cole  
*Baghdad Sketches* by Freya Stark  
*A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway  
*The Road from Coorain* by Jill Ker Conway  
*Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Greely  
*Boy and Solo* by Roald Dahl  
*The Absolutely True Story of a Part Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie  
*A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Bael  
*Pass the Butterworms* by Tim Cahill

Please feel free to check other sources for “free choice” books. You can also check various sources of your own: your local library, bookstores, and websites such as [www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com), or [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). For information on award-winning young adult literature, visit the American Library Association’s website on literary awards.

**We will post this letter on our website ([www.bement.org](http://www.bement.org)).** We hope you all find time to read this summer. There are many ways to discover a love of literature.

Have a wonderful, restful summer! We look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Sincerely,

Amie Keddy, English Department Chair  
Shelley B. Jackson, Leif Riddington, Amy Gordon,  
George Chapman, Ted Pina, Frank Massey